

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

February Session, 2012

Raised Bill No. 5217

**An Act Concerning Revisions to Statutes Concerning the Department of Children and
Families;**

Section 11 - Registry Removal

Referred to Select Committee on Children

REMARKS OF ATTY. MICHAEL H. AGRANOFF

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I have been a DCF defense lawyer since 1991. At present, ours is the only law firm in the State of Connecticut providing full-service DCF defense to private-paying adults on a full-time basis.

Section 11 of the present bill provides a mechanism for persons who have been placed on the state child abuse and neglect registry to be removed from the registry for good cause. Our

office has been working with DCF for over three years to have this bill introduced, and we commend DCF for raising it.

The bill removes a serious anomaly in the Connecticut state justice system. At present, it is possible for a person convicted of a misdemeanor or a felony, including murder, to receive a pardon; but there is no mechanism to be “pardoned” or removed from the registry. Therefore, a person may suffer serious lifetime employment or other consequences, due to a one-time act for which he or she has long since atoned, and even if he or she is clearly no longer a danger to children. Additionally, many persons are on the registry for one-time non-serious acts committed before October 1, 2005, when being substantiated meant automatic registry placement.

This office has represented many non-dangerous persons who were not even aware that they were on the registry, yet found themselves unable to secure employment. It must be noted that few if any of those persons were aware of their right to legal counsel when first being investigated by DCF. In short, we often have innocent, unrepresented persons unable to get a job, with no means to redress the situation.

With this bill, a person has a reasonable chance to prove that he or she should be removed from the registry. The requirements for a DCF registry removal application are reasonable. Further, the availability of an administrative appeal remedy also protects the applicant.

Our office supports this bill as being long overdue for the citizens of Connecticut.

Respectfully Submitted,

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mha.LOB.testimony.5217.registry